TV21

ANNUAL 1971

STAR TREK.... JOE 90.... TARZAN.... THE SAINT....

LAND OF THE GIANTS.... PLUS MANY MORE

STAR TREK CAPTIVES IN SPACE

AS THEY INVESTIGATED...
MAYBE THEY DIDN'T EXPECT US SO QUICKLY. BUT THERE'S A FARMER OR SOMETHING, OVER THERE!

KIRK TRIED HIS TRANSLATOR/COMMUNICATOR...
GREETINGS! YOU NEED NOT FEAR US. WE COME IN PEACE...
HE DOESN'T UNDERSTAND! LOOK AT HIS EYES! HE'S LIKE... LIKE AN ANIMAL!

HE IS AN ANIMAL, EARTHMAN! I CONFESS, YOU LOOK RATHER LIKE HIM YOURSELF!
WHAT THE...?

YOU ARE THE RULERS OF THIS PLANET?
BUT, OF COURSE. MY FATHER IS SUPREME HEAD. I AM MENO, VICE REGENT AND AMBASSADOR!

COME, A RECEPTION HAS BEEN PREPARED FOR YOU!

SOON...
THIS IS CRAZY, SKIPPER! HUMANOIDS TREATED LIKE BEASTS—TWO-LEGGED ANIMALS IN CONTROL. I DON'T LIKE IT...
EVOLUTION'S BEEN DIFFERENT HERE, SCOTTY. WE HAVE TO ACCEPT IT, THAT'S ALL!

THEIR WELCOME BY ZELDON, THE RULER OF SKUR, SEEMED A LITTLE STRAINED...
I...I KNOW THEY SEEM LIKE OUR ANIMAL SPECIES, FATHER, BUT THE RESEMBLANCE IS ONLY SUPERFICIAL!
BY JUPITER! DID YOU HEAR THAT?
FOR PETE'S SAKE CONTROL YOURSELF, SCOTT! YOU'RE TOO DARNED EDGY!
IT IS UNDERSTANDABLE! BUT, STAY, THIS IS AN ILL START TO YOUR VISIT!
IT WASN'T UNTIL THE OFFICIAL BANQUET THAT THE TROUBLE FLARED UP AGAIN...
THAT DOES IT! THEY ACCUSE US OF BEING ANIMALS – AND JUST LOOK AT THEM!
NO, SCOTT!
BUT THE DAMAGE WAS DONE...
THEY INSULT ME! THEY ARE ANIMALS, MENG, AND THEY SHALL BE TREATED AS SUCH! SEIZE THEM!
HOPELESSLY OUTNUMBERED, THE MEN FROM 'ENTERPRISE' WERE DRAGGED THROUGH THE STREETS...
WHERE THE BLAZES ARE THEY TAKING US?
WE CAN'T EVEN ASK! MENG TOOK THE COMMUNICATOR, AND THAT MEANS WE CAN'T EVEN LET 'ENTERPRISE' KNOW THE SITUATION!
SUDDENLY, THEIR DESTINATION BECAME HORRIFYINGLY CLEAR...
GOOD GRIEF! IT'S A ZOO! WE'RE BEING PUT ON SHOW!
IT...IT'S UNBELIEVABLE!

MOMENTS LATER, A DOOR BANGED SHUT AND...
WE'RE GOING TO BE STUCK HERE, POKED AT, PROBABLY EVEN THROWN NUTS, UNTIL 'ENTERPRISE' REALIZES SOMETHING'S WRONG!
MENG'S VOICE BROKE IN ON SPOCK...
I'M AFRAID YOU'LL WAIT FOR EVER. MY FATHER HAS ORDERED THE DESTRUCTION OF YOUR SHIP!
ABRUPTLY, THE YOUNG SKURIAN SPUN ON HIS HEEL...
SO MUCH FOR OUR HOPES. SOMEHOW, GENTLEMEN, WE HAVE TO ESCAPE FROM HERE, AND QUICKLY!
THEIR CHANCE CAME SOONER THAN THEY DARED HOPE...
FEEDING TIME FOR THE ANIMALS. THE KEEPERS LOOK AS THOUGH THEY THINK WE'RE DUMB!
THEY PROBABLY HAVEN'T BEEN TOLD OTHERWISE. THE MOMENT THE DOOR'S OPEN, RUSH THEM, BUT WATCH THAT GOAD!
THE SKURIAN CITIZENS RAN FEARFULLY...
AAAH! SKAPKA!
SPED! SPED!
HEAD FOR THE FIRST COVER OUTSIDE THE GATES! ONCE THE ALARM'S GIVEN, MENG'S BOUND TO RETURN – WE'VE GOT TO AMBUSH HIM FOR THAT COMMUNICATOR!

HIDING WAS EASY - FOR, WITHIN THE ZOO, THE PANIC HAD DRIVEN THE CAGED WILD-LIFE TO A TERRIFYING FRENZY...
GRAAHH!
SNAARL!
FROM CONCEALMENT, KIRK AND HIS COLLEAGUES HEARD THE RUSH OF APPROACHING FEET...
STEADY - HERE HE COMES! SCOTT, SPOCK - GRAB THE GUNS, I'LL GO FOR THE COMMUNICATOR!
BUT, IN THAT MOMENT, THE FREED BEASTS BROKE FROM THE ZOO GATES...
FALL BACK! THE DEADLY ONES HAVE ESCAPED!
AAAGH!
SCOTT SAW HIS CHANCE...
COME ON! LET'S GET CLEAR AND CALL THE SHIP TO BEAM US BACK!

FREEDOM WAS IN SIGHT - BUT KIRK'S HAND CLOSED OVER HIS OFFICER'S ARM...
WAIT, SCOTTY! LOOK AT MENG!
BUT, CAPTAIN...

WILDLY, THE SKIPPER OF 'ENTERPRISE' FLUNG HIMSELF FORWARD IN A DESPERATE DIVE...

EEEEH!

YOU...YOU SAVED MY LIFE! YET...YOU OWE ME NOTHING!

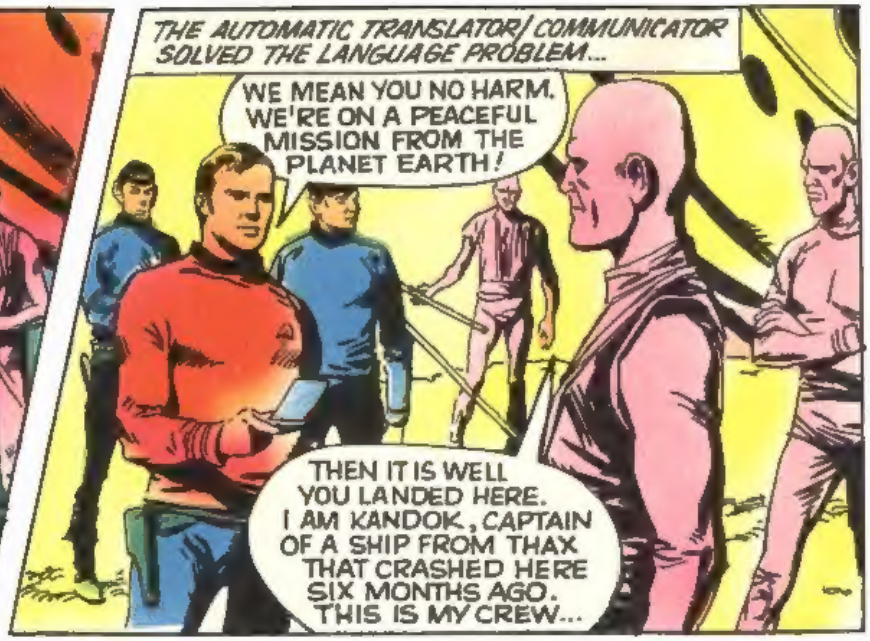
THAT'S THE WAY WE BEHAVE, MENG - NOT LIKE ANIMALS. MAYBE YOU'LL TELL YOUR FATHER THAT!

THE EFFECT WAS PROVED LATER WHEN KIRK AND THE OTHERS STOOD WAITING FOR THE 'ENTERPRISE'S' TRANSPORTER BEAM TO ZERO IN...
GOOD-BYE, MENG. I WISH I COULD SAY IT'S BEEN A PLEASURE...
MY FATHER KNOWS NOW HE ACTED WRONGLY. PERHAPS THE TIME IS NOT YET RIPE FOR US TO UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER. BUT THAT TIME WILL SURELY COME!

PLANET OF STAR TREK REJECTS

MY STARS! IT'S BURNING UP - DISINTEGRATING! STAND BY, MR. SPOCK - WE'RE GOING DOWN, JUST IN CASE ANY OF THE CREW MANAGED TO EJECT!
PUTTING 'ENTERPRISE' INTO A PARKING ORBIT, CAPTAIN KIRK PILOTED A SHUTTLECRAFT AWAY FROM THE GIANT SHIP...
DO YOU THINK THERE'S A CHANCE OF FINDING SURVIVORS, CAPTAIN?
I DIDN'T SEE ANY ESCAPE ATTEMPT - BUT WE CAN'T LEAVE WITHOUT MAKING SURE!
AS THEY BROKE THROUGH THE CLOUD BARRIERS, A FANTASTIC SIGHT MET THEIR EYES...
GOOD GRIEF! WHAT SORT OF PLACE IS THIS?
MOMENTS LATER...
MY GUESS IS IT'S A JUNKYARD, MR. SPOCK - A DUMP FOR OBSOLETE CRAFT FROM EVERY INHABITED PLANET IN THE GALAXY!
SO THAT SHIP WE SAW MUST HAVE BEEN UNMANNED - SENT HERE TO JOIN THE PILE!
THEN IT HAPPENED! A SUDDEN, UNEXPECTED MOVEMENT TOOK THEM UNAWARES...
WHAT THE BLAZES...?

NO, SULU - NO PISTOL TACTICS YET. LET'S FIND OUT WHO THEY ARE...

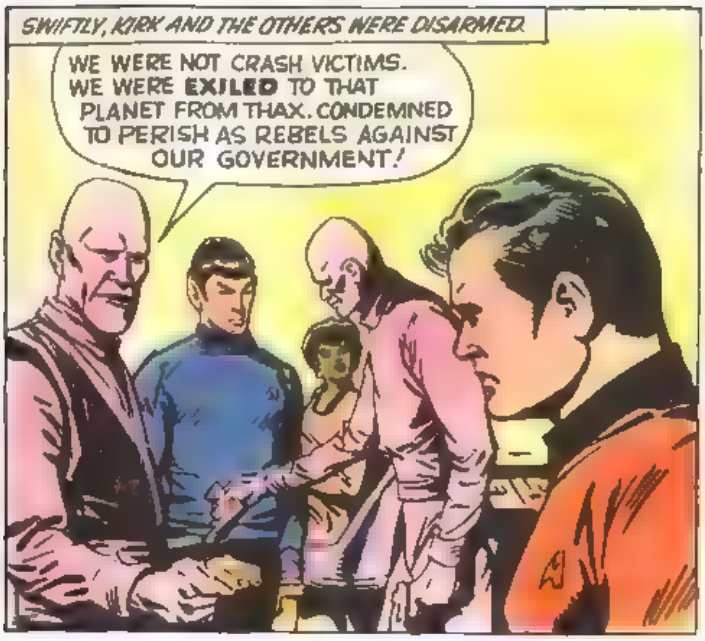

THE AUTOMATIC TRANSLATOR/COMMUNICATOR SOLVED THE LANGUAGE PROBLEM...
WE MEAN YOU NO HARM. WE'RE ON A PEACEFUL MISSION FROM THE PLANET EARTH!
THEN IT IS WELL YOU LANDED HERE. I AM KANDOK, CAPTAIN OF A SHIP FROM THAX THAT CRASHED HERE SIX MONTHS AGO. THIS IS MY CREW...

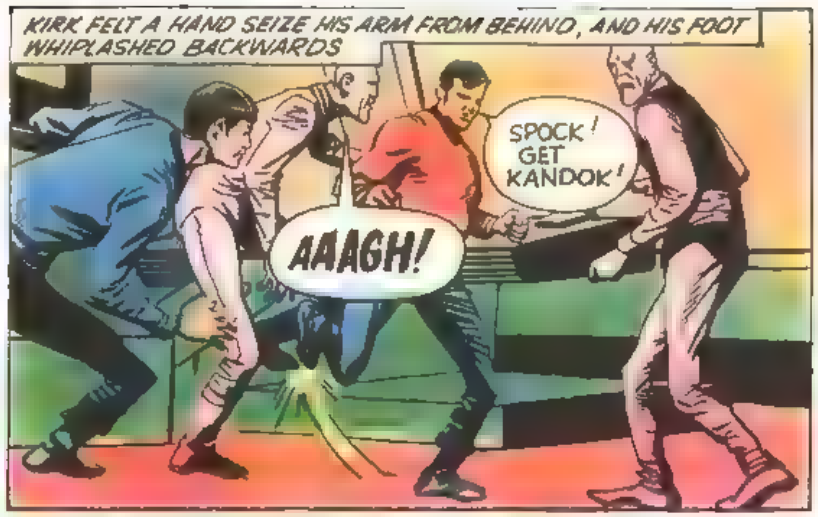
WITHOUT RADIO, WITH LITTLE FOOD, WE WERE PREPARED TO DIE HERE, STRANDED!
THEN YOUR WORRIES ARE OVER, FRIEND. WE'LL TAKE YOU BACK TO YOUR PLANET!

ABOARD 'ENTERPRISE' SPECIAL QUARTERS WERE MADE READY FOR THE ALIENS...
HOPE YOU'LL BE COMFORTABLE, KANDOK. CAN YOU GIVE ME A COURSE FOR THAX?
CERTAINLY. WE WILL GO TO YOUR COMMAND CENTRE?

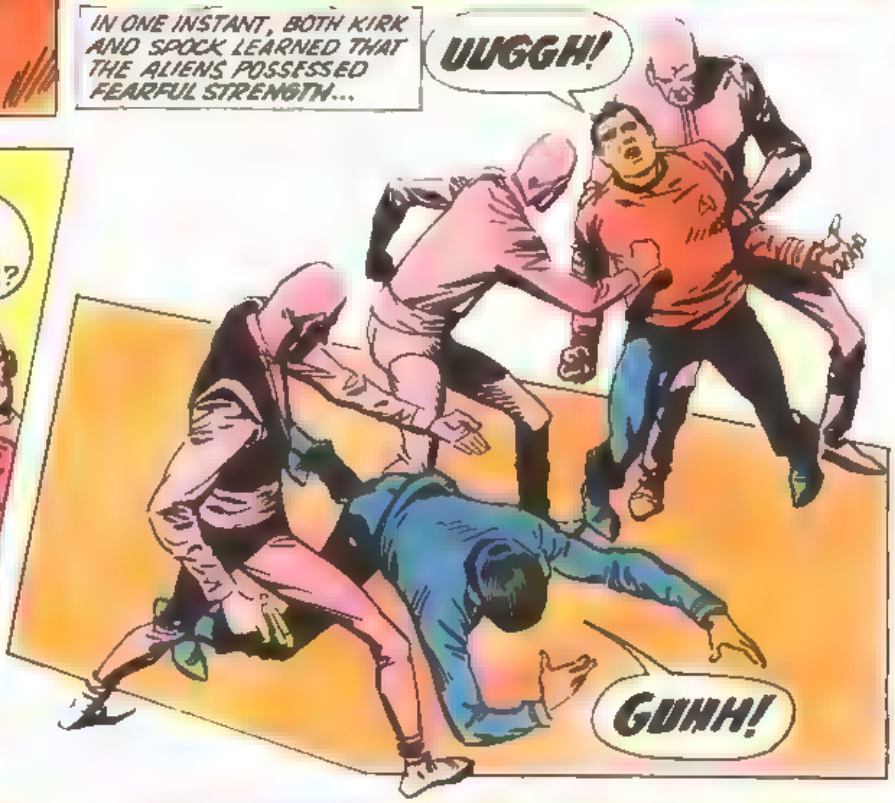
AND SO...
THE CALCULATIONS ARE QUITE SIMPLE...
PERHAPS YOU'D LIKE ME TO CONTACT THAX AND GIVE THEM THE GOOD NEWS OF YOUR RESCUE?

IT WAS THEN THAT KANDOK MOVED — TOO SWIFTLY FOR KIRK TO STOP HIM...
THERE WILL BE NO COMMUNICATIONS, CAPTAIN!
WHAT THE HECK...?


SWIFTLY, KIRK AND THE OTHERS WERE DISARMED.
WE WERE NOT CRASH VICTIMS. WE WERE EXILED TO THAT PLANET FROM THAX. CONDEMNED TO PERISH AS REBELS AGAINST OUR GOVERNMENT!


KIRK FELT A HAND SEIZE HIS ARM FROM BEHIND, AND HIS FOOT WHIPLASHED BACKWARDS
SPOCK! GET KANDOK!
AAAGH!

YOU FOOLS! DO YOU THINK YOU CAN DEFY THE MIGHT OF KANDOK?

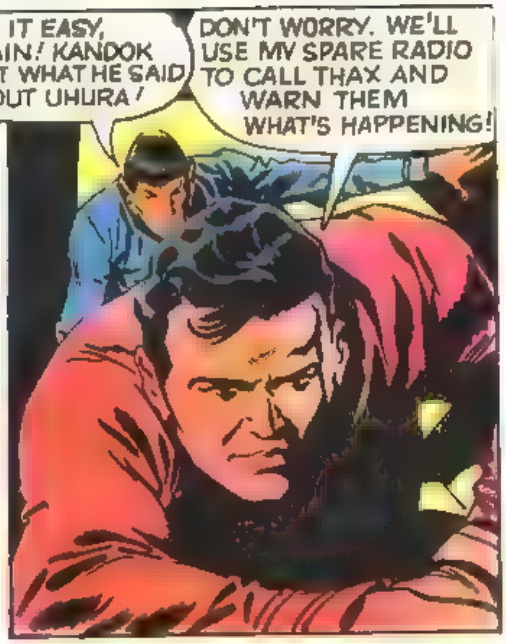

IN ONE INSTANT, BOTH KIRK AND SPOCK LEARNED THAT THE ALIENS POSSESSED FEARFUL STRENGTH...
UUGGH!
GUNH!

THE AGONY OF THE BLOW SEEPED SLOWLY FROM KIRK'S BODY...
NOW, CAPTAIN, YOU WILL OBEY ME IMPLICITLY. THE GIRL IS MY HOSTAGE. ONE FALSE MOVE OF ANY KIND AND SHE DIES!

HELPLESS, KIRK COULD DO NOTHING BUT HAND OVER CONTROL AND FORBID THE CREW TO ATTEMPT RETALIATION
LOCK THOSE TWO UP! THEY'RE DANGEROUS– THE GIRL STAYS IN HERE WITH US!

THE HEAVY STEEL DOOR OF A STOREROOM BANGED SHUT ON CAPTAIN AND VICE COMMANDER
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, SPOCK?
JUST ABOUT! THIS IS A REAL MESS, CAPTAIN!

TAKE IT EASY, CAPTAIN! KANDOK MEANT WHAT HE SAID ABOUT UHURA!
I'M HANGED IF I'M LETTING MY SHIP RUN THOSE PIRATES BACK TO THEIR PLANET. GIVE ME A HAND - WE CAN WORK OUR WAY THROUGH THE VENTILATOR SYSTEM TO MY QUARTERS...


DON'T WORRY. WE'LL USE MY SPARE RADIO TO CALL THAX AND WARN THEM WHAT'S HAPPENING!

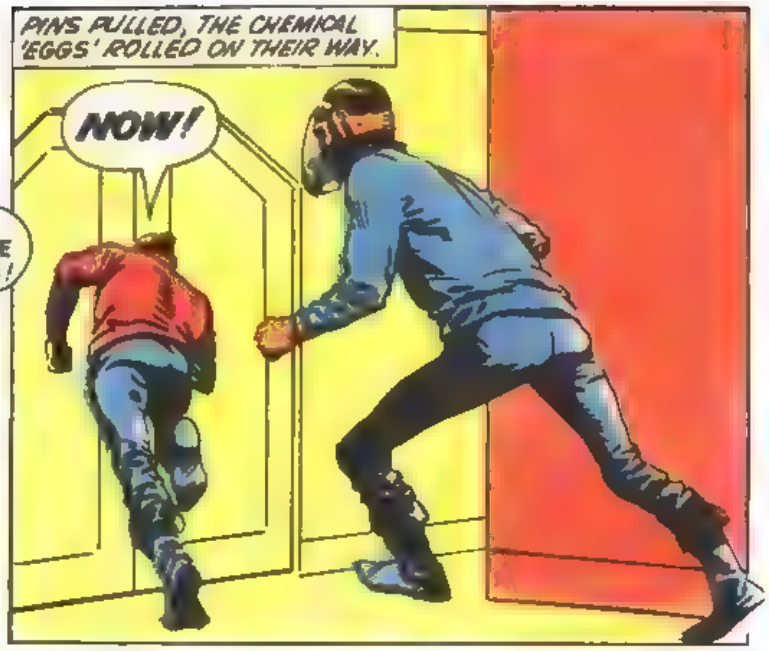
FROM WITHIN KIRK'S QUARTERS THEY MADE RAPID CONTACT WITH THAX BUT ...
IT IS OBVIOUS THE MAN KANDOK INTENDS TO STIR UP OUR PEOPLE AGAIN. WE CANNOT TOLERATE HIS RETURN AT ANY COST! CAN YOU RE-CAPTURE YOUR SHIP?
NEGATIVE. I REFUSE TO RISK THE MURDER OF MY COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER!

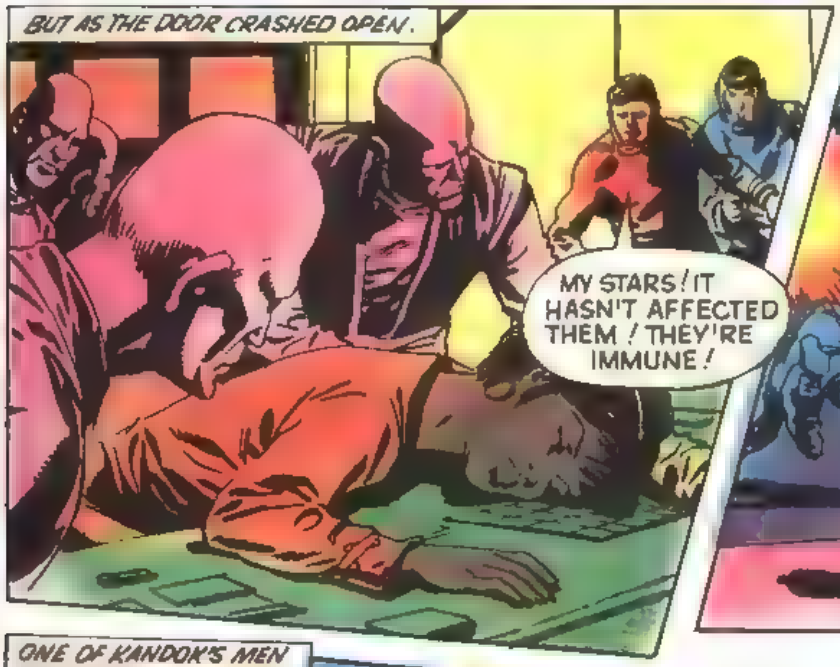
WE CARE NOTHING FOR THAT! WE REGRET YOUR SHIP MUST BE DESTROYED BY MISSILE FIRE!
BY JUPITER! THIS IS CRAZY! EVERYONE ON THAX IS AS HEARTLESS AS KANDOK!

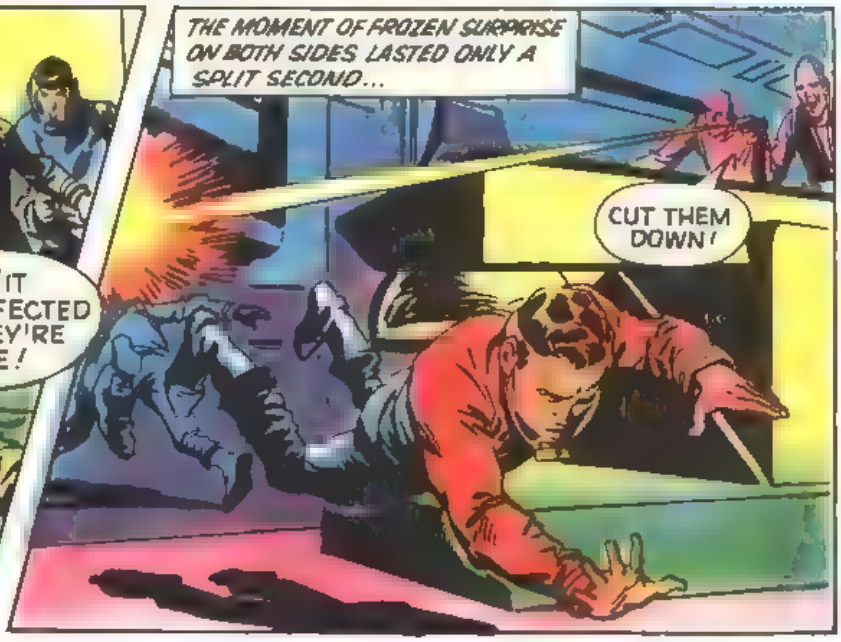
TIME PREVENTED FURTHER ARGUING...
WHATEVER THE RISK, WE MUST RE-TAKE THE SHIP! IF WE DON'T ACTIVATE THE DEFENSIVE SYSTEMS IN TIME, WE'LL ALL BE BLOWN TO BITS!
USE THAT BRAIN OF YOURS, SPOCK! DREAM UP A PLAN - BUT FAST!

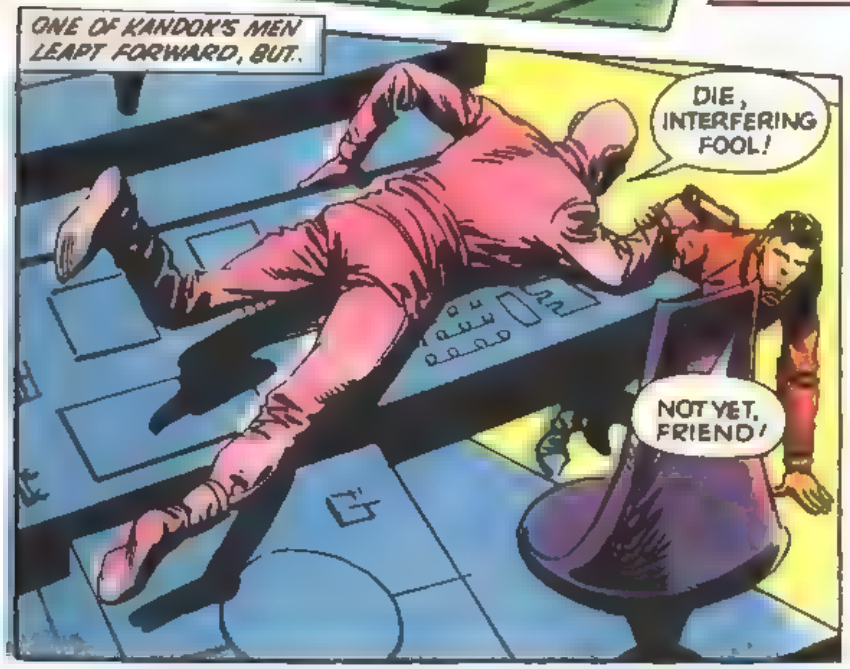
KNOCK-OUT GAS, CAPTAIN! PIPED INTO THE VENTILATION SYSTEM! IT'LL MEAN A HEADACHE FOR UHURA - BUT SHE'LL BE SAFE!
BY GLORY, THAT'S IT! GET THE WHOLE LOT AT ONE BLOW!

SIMPLE IN THEORY, IT WAS EVEN SIMPLER IN PRACTICE...
TWO GAS GRENADES WILL BE ENOUGH. LET'S GET THESE MASKS ON AND DROP THEM IN!
HAND 'EM UP. THEY SHOULD TAKE FIVE SECONDS!


PINS PULLED, THE CHEMICAL 'EGGS' ROLLED ON THEIR WAY.
NOW!


BUT AS THE DOOR CRASHED OPEN.
MY STARS! IT HASN'T AFFECTED THEM! THEY'RE IMMUNE!


THE MOMENT OF FROZEN SURPRISE ON BOTH SIDES LASTED ONLY A SPLIT SECOND...
CUT THEM DOWN!


ONE OF KANDOR'S MEN LEAPT FORWARD, BUT..
DIE, INTERFERING FOOL!
NOT YET, FRIEND!

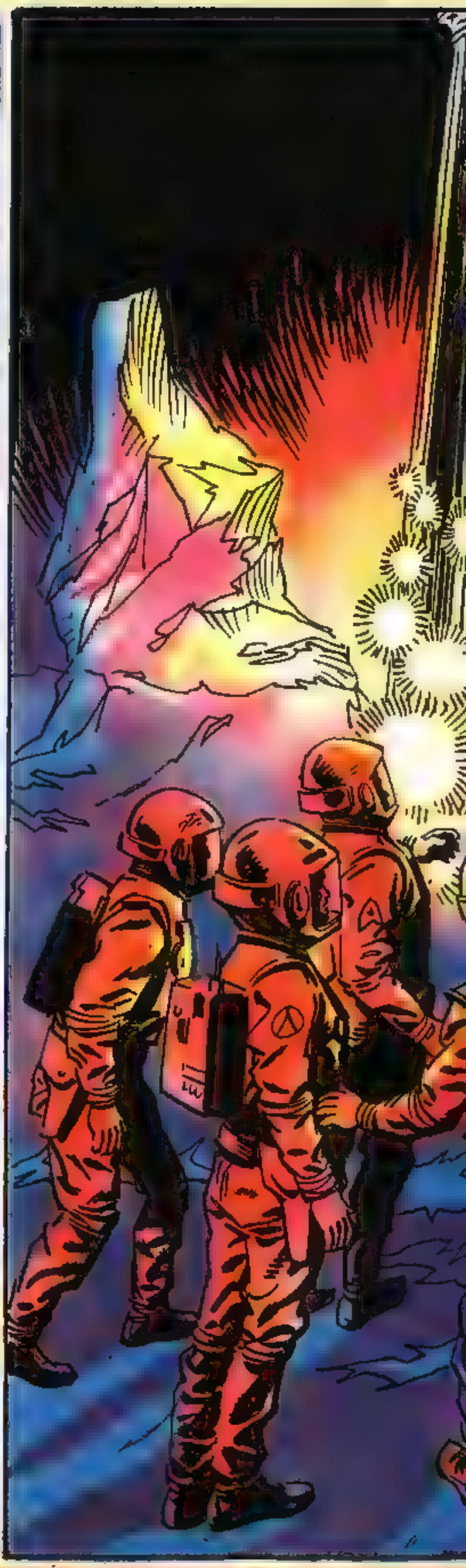
YIEEEE!

THE COMMAND CENTRE ECHOED TO THE SIZZLING BLAST OF PHASERS ..
GIVE UP, CAPTAIN! YOU ARE OUTNUMBERED!
NEVER, KANDOK! YOU'D BETTER LISTEN TO ME, OR WE'RE ALL DOOMED!
KIRK'S WARNING WAS NEVER TO BE UNDERSTOOD! A CHANCE BURST SMASHED THE TRANSLATOR/COMMUNICATOR ON HIS DESK
MEANWHILE, OUTSIDE IN SPACE, A TRIO OF DEADLY NUCLEAR MISSILES SPED UPWARDS FROM THAX ON A PATH OF DESTRUCTION!
IN THE COMMAND CENTRE, KIRK'S GREATER FAMILIARITY WITH THE PHASER PISTOL BEGAN TO PAY DIVIDENDS..
NEKAT! PORSKON KINDAXU!
EXTA!
THEY'RE KEEPING ME PINNED DOWN!
THEY'RE MAKING A RUN FOR IT, CAPTAIN! THEY'LL TRY FOR A SHUTTLECRAFT!

THE HEAVY DOOR SLID CLOSED AFTER THE THAXIAN LEADER.
THEY'RE WELCOME TO IT! TAKE CARE OF UHURA, SPOCK. I'VE GOT TO TRIGGER THE DEFENCE SYSTEM!
EASING UHURA FORWARD, SPOCK SNAPPED ON THE BIG VIDEO SCREEN
HURRY, FOR PITY'S SAKE! THE MISSILES ARE HERE – THEY'RE RIGHT ON TOP OF US!
KIRK SLAMMED DOWN THE SWITCH AND THE FORCE FIELD THAT INSTANTLY SURROUNDED THE SHIP DISINTEGRATED TWO OF THE ROCKETS. BUT THE PATH OF THE THIRD HAD BEEN INTERRUPTED BY A NEW TARGET
KANDOK'S SHUTTLECRAFT!
IT WAS SWIFT AND FINAL. A BRIEF, FLARING EXPLOSION...
GONE! JUST LIKE THAT! SO MUCH FOR HIS DREAMS OF POWER!
THAX IS ONE PLANET I WANT TO LEAVE OFF OUR VISITING LIST FOR A LONG TIME!
AND SO MUCH FOR THIS SECTOR OF SPACE. SIGNAL STAND-DOWN, MR. SPOCK – WE'RE GOING!

STAR TREK

GATEWAY to the FUTURE



Far from the centre of Galaxy M-674, the dying sun grew colder, its planets slowly being pulled in . . . in towards the old star. According to calculations taken by Mr. Spock, the sun would cease to exist within fifty years and the seven planets ten years before that.

Watching the feeble efforts of the sun to shoot warmth across its solar space, Captain James Kirk felt strangely sad. He knew the universe created and destroyed stars by the hundreds of thousands. As one died, another was born in a blaze of flaming gas. Yet, it was always sad seeing the end of something so majestic as a solar system.

He thought how it would be when the Earth's sun reached this same stage—and it would, some day. All stars burned themselves out eventually. But when that time came, mankind would no longer be on Earth. He would have travelled to other star systems and settled on strange, far-flung planets across countless galactic empires.

That was part of his job—exploring space; searching the many galaxies for future homes; places man could colonise.

The second part was making peace with alien races. If man was

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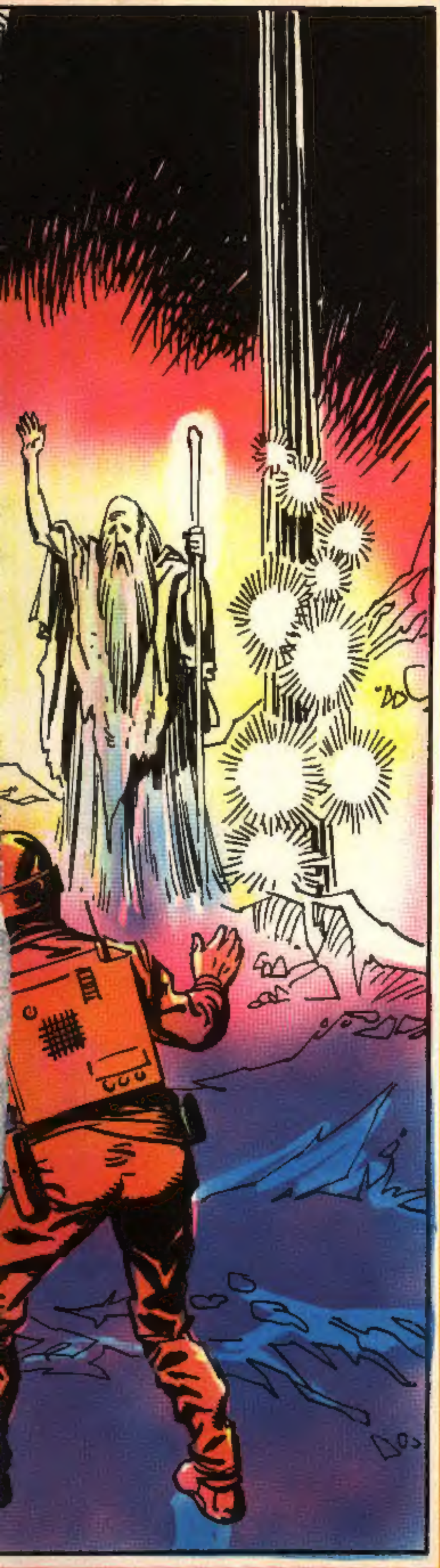

to voyage to other worlds he had to mix peacefully with his neighbours in space; strange neighbours—sometimes, *warlike* neighbours. . .

"Captain—look at this!"

Kirk swung from the viewport and went to Mr. Spock's side. He studied the sensor readings, the computer tapes in Spock's hands. "What is it?" he asked softly.

"I'm not sure," Spock replied. "But it looks like a life form on the fourth planet."

Kirk frowned. It couldn't be! Nothing could live on that cold, barren world. Its atmosphere had drained off centuries ago—when the sun started growing old. Even as he looked at the monitor screens, he could see that the surface was a solid sheet of ice.

"Prepare a landing party, Mr. Spock," Kirk ordered then. "Have them equipped for extreme cold." He started to swing away but then halted. "I think I'll come with you, too," he added.

Thirty minutes later, four men materialised on the weird planet's surface. Teleportation had solved many problems for 'Enterprise's' crew. With it, men could be dematerialised and 'shot' from the giant starship to a celestial body within seconds—regardless of whether or not the planet had an atmosphere capable of sustaining winged flight. That was important in space exploration. So many alien planets did not have an atmosphere above them. So many, too, were continually circled by flying hunks of jagged space junk.

Kirk stared through his visor, seeing nothing but ice around him—ice and monstrous mountains in the distance. Speaking into his suit radio, he asked: "What is your reading now, Spock?"

Spock scanned the surface with his portable sensor. Suddenly, he stiffened and snapped; "Over there, Captain—behind that near range of mountains!"

Kirk pointed with a thickly gloved hand. "Let's go, men. It's a long walk. . ."

The old man appeared as if by magic, his clothes reflecting the flashing lights from the two strange columns.

Darkness was thickening when the party reached its destination. Ahead of them, twin columns rose into the semi-blackness of the solar void. They seemed as though they might have been fashioned by man—*or a race capable of building like man.*

Kirk was reminded of those ancient pillars in Greece—the ones belonging to the wonderful temples standing above Athens. They were high—at least forty feet tall. Down the inside of each column, a series of flashing lights kept racing up and down . . . up and down . . . winking and blinking with monotonous regularity.

"What is it, Captain?" asked Crewman Shafer incredulously.

Kirk shook his head. He was about to say he didn't know either. About to say—and then he saw the old, bent figure of a man appear as if by magic.

Spock shouted: "Captain. . ."

Kirk silenced him with a curt: "I see him!"

The Earthmen watched in silence now as the old man shuffled forward until he stood between the twin columns. His tattered robes reflected the flashing lights, his furrowed face showed his unbelievable age. In one gnarled hand he held a staff—but this, like the pillars, glowed from within.

"Welcome, Earthlings," the quavering voice said. "I am the Guardian of the Future. I have waited a long time for you. . ."

Kirk was puzzled. The man spoke perfect English and he could hear him, although his suit-microphone was *not* tuned in for an outside pick-up. A quick glance at his companions showed him that they, too, were hearing that old, crackling voice.

"You are puzzled," the Guardian chuckled. "Don't be afraid. I speak in your mind—telepathically. . ."

Spock grinned. He was able to send—and receive—telepathic messages, too. His father had been a Vulcanite, his mother an Earthwoman. That was why he was different from the other crewmen of the 'Enterprise'. He, alone, was incapable of human emotions, although he could fully understand the emotions that guided his fellow spacemen.

"Why have you waited for *us*?" Spock asked in thought.

"Ah," came the Guardian's reply.

"The one called Spock is able to communicate with me telepathically. . ."

Kirk heard a soft sigh then from the old man. He didn't know what Spock had asked but he felt sure it would get them the answers they wanted to hear. He was right. . .

The Guardian waved his staff, beckoned them forward. "Come through the Gateway with me," he said. "My time is running out. I must show you the future before I depart. . ."

One of the crewmen stepped forward. Kirk barked: "Stop!" He stared at the old man: "What will *happen* to us?"

"Nothing—if you obey my instructions," came the Guardian's reply. He waved his staff at the flashing lights on the twin columns. "Centuries ago, my people discovered how to walk into the future. These lights are the Gateway. When you pass through them you immediately select a time far in advance of your own."

"A time-machine . . ." Crewman Hurst exclaimed.

"Yes," the old Guardian said with a wrinkled smile. He looked at Kirk: "And what do you wish to know about the future, Captain?"

Kirk grinned too. The old man looked exactly like the pictures of Father Time he had seen as a boy back on Earth. He trusted the other now. "I would like to see what will happen on Earth when we return from our voyages," he said.

"That shall be arranged," the Guardian told him. "Step through the Gateway. You *won't* be needing that!" he added, pointing to Kirk's helmet.

"How do we get back?" Kirk asked.

"Call me in your mind," the old man explained. "I shall know and return you to this planet."

Kirk nodded. "Spock—you come with me. You two"—and he looked at each man through his visor—"stay here! If anything goes wrong, get back to the ship and carry on without me."

Hurst slammed a gloved fist into his other palm. "I could go with you, sir. . ."

Kirk shook his head. "No, Hurst. Spock and I go—and that's final!" He motioned to Spock and, together, the two men approached the Gateway, removing their helmets and oxya-packs as they stepped between the pillars. . .

Then, as the flashing lights raced over them, Kirk felt a strange tingling in his muscles. Everything began to fade and he felt himself fall . . . fall. . .

They were in America . . . Los Angeles. Kirk recognised the freeway as it soared over Hollywood. Not far away, the Hollywood Bowl sat empty, lifeless under a canopy of twinkling stars. Sleek, radar-guided cars streaked along the express lane towards the Mexican border as others went in the opposite direction bound for Canada and the Alaskan oilfields. Local traffic scooted back and forth on the service lanes, shuttled off the controlled freeway as their destinations were reached.

"Nothing's changed," Spock remarked.

"No? Look over there . . ." Kirk said grimly.

From where they stood to one side of the freeway, they could see the military installation facing the Hollywood limits of Los Angeles. Grim-faced soldiers guarded the one, massive blaster aimed at the downtown heart of the city.

Overhead, several rockets zoomed back and forth across the valley, diving and circling areas where orange-red flashes zipped upwards at the sky.

"It's . . . it's unbelievable," Kirk muttered. His gaze swung to include a group of young people scrambling up the scrub slope near them. He could see the gleaming weapons in their hands, the grubby clothes they wore.

Within seconds, they were surrounded, phasers aimed at them, weary faces watching their every movement.

"I'm Captain Kirk of the USS 'Enterprise'," Kirk said.

A young man laughed savagely. "*'Enterprise' foundered last week.*"

Kirk stiffened. If this was the future he didn't wish to know more. This wasn't the Earth he'd left. What had happened and was 'Enterprise' really destined to be destroyed?

"Who are you?" Spock asked.

"Arrowists," the young man replied proudly.

Arrowists! Kirk knew that name. Before 'Enterprise' had departed on her voyage of exploration, the Arrowists had been peaceful hippies. They had used the name 'Arrowists' because it reminded them of the Red Indian and how he

Spock jabbed the 'fire' button of his phaser and the youth collapsed suddenly.

hunted in peace with his bow and arrow *before* Columbus arrived in America.

"But," Kirk said, "Arrowists don't believe in using phasers. . ."

"We didn't," the other replied. "Not until the military tried to wipe us out."

Kirk exchanged a horrified look with Spock. *The military!* Had Earth been taken over by a dictatorship? Had all the years of peace

been thrown away again?

"We're from the USS 'Enterprise'," Kirk began again. "We've been exploring space for five years. What is happening here?"

The youth seemed puzzled. "Don't you honestly know?"

"Would I ask if I did?" Kirk snarled.

Turning to his grim-faced companions, the youth said: "I think he's telling the truth. *But*, the radio said 'Enterprise' had been destroyed by an asteroid bombardment as it passed near Mars!" He seemed lost, wanting to believe Kirk yet mystified by what he had heard.

Kirk grinned. "I can't explain how we happened to be here but, please, trust us. We have no part in your fight. We just want to know what's happening on Earth."

"Look," the youth said, pointing to the military installation across the freeway. "See how they keep their weapons aimed at the city? That blaster they have built can fire only once. But should it do so —at *us*—then there would be need for nothing more. See how *ready* they are to fire on everything that moves against them? Perhaps, one day, they *will* even use the blaster."

Kirk could see the weapons—and the soldiers crouched behind them. "I see," he said slowly.

"A year ago," the long-haired youth explained, "we were willing to accept a new ruling that all Arrowists kept to restricted areas. We were willing to suffer hardships and primitive conditions just so we could continue to live as we wanted. But even that wasn't enough for the military. They demanded we surrender our bows and arrows and beg for what little food they decided we must have to exist upon."

Spock nodded, speaking now. "You refused and started fighting."

"Yes," the youth said. "We fought. We fought and fought until now there are only a few thousand of us left."

"How many of you were there before the fighting?" Kirk asked.

"Fifty thousand!"

Spock grinned. "Ten thousand," he said calmly, reading the youth's mind.

Kirk shook his head in wonderment. Even if there had been ten thousand, that meant almost nine thousand had been wiped out!

Spock raised his phaser-transceiver and asked: "Mind if I call our ship?"

The youth bristled. His eyes widened and his face tensed. "No! *Don't!*"

"Why?" Spock asked with a smile.

"We . . . we . . . ," the youth stammered.

Spock turned the phaser until it aimed at the youth. He jabbed the 'fire' button and the youth collapsed suddenly. Before the others had a chance to use their own weapons, Spock swept them with the deadly phaser—coldly smiling as each fell to the ground.

"Spock!" Kirk shouted.

"It's on *stun*," Spock explained as the last Arrowist slumped forward.

"You'd better have a good reason for this," Kirk warned.

"I have," the super-intelligent Spock replied. Bending over the youth, he went through the other's pockets. Then, holding a slip of paper, he straightened, reading the scrawled words written on it. "Long live Arrowists! Anybody else is an *enemy*!"

Kirk glared across the freeway to the military post. "And that means?" he asked the unemotional Spock.

"I can tell you *when* we capture that installation," Spock laughed. "You see, Captain—there is something you forget. We entered the Gateway of the Future. But how *far* into the future did we travel?"

Kirk looked at him questioningly.

Spock smiled, then explained: "Have we actually returned to Earth?"

"Certainly," Kirk said. "This is Los Angeles. . ."

"Is it?" Spock asked and, without warning, started running for the freeway. . .

Almost as soon as Spock dived into the fortified installation, Kirk realised that the soldiers were aliens . . . extra-terrestials. He recognised the insignia attached to their shoulder-flashes, the long faces. It seemed like years ago when the 'Enterprise' had ventured into Nobian territory. . .

Kirk's fists windmilled, clobbering soldier after soldier. Phasers

were useless against Nobians. He could see Spock chopping—rabbit-punching man after man—sometimes pausing to land an uppercut to an alien jaw as he charged through the emplacement.

Experience had taught Kirk a hard lesson. He avoided Nobian fingers reaching for him. He knew that the aliens' fingertips gave off an electrical discharge equal to a thunderbolt. It would take just one touch at the nape of a human neck.

He reached the Nobian weapon, the massive blaster which overpowered all the smaller, surrounding weapons, and swung the barrel. Aiming at the barren hillside, directly behind the Hollywood Bowl, he fired. The crackling energy bolt disintegrated the hillside, in one searing blast.

"Behind you . . ." Spock's voice yelled.

Kirk swung, landed a perfect hook to the alien's jaw. All about him, Nobian soldiers lay sprawled in defeat.

"Glad you fired the blaster," Spock said then, grinning, and dusting off his clothes.

Kirk laughed softly. "We could not take the chance of having Los Angeles. . ." He stopped and asked: *"Is it Los Angeles?"*

"No!" Spock replied. "We've landed after Earth perished when our solar system's sun burnt out. The 'Enterprise' the Arrowists spoke about is probably another starship mankind sent out centuries *after* us."

"Where is this then?" Kirk asked.

"I don't know," Spock answered. "But wherever it is—we've changed the future! Rest assured—mankind will leave Earth. But when he does somebody will come along to save him from the aliens."

Kirk smiled, thought about his own time—his return to the Gateway. . .

The old, bent Guardian laughed softly as Kirk and Spock materialised between the flashing columns. "Did you have an enjoyable visit?"

Kirk smiled. "Yes, we did! Thanks, old man—we can make a record now for our descendants to follow."

"I'm glad," the old man said. "I was worried. You see—somebody *had* to know what could be. Had to warn the others. . ."

"Our children?" Kirk asked.

The old man nodded, started to vanish. For a second his body shimmered into brilliance. Then, quickly, it faded—faded as his thought-voice said: "The stars are not always constant, Captain. Nor is mankind's future. With your knowledge, your Earth-people can be saved from a terrible fate. Make sure you write all that you have seen into the records. One day, another Captan Kirk in another USS 'Enterprise' will value your report. That way, Earthmen will always be here to help other civilisations to find their way. . . ."

The voice ended, and the Gateway lights blinked for the last time. Now, the twin columns were just columns—stone carved by some forgotten hand. The future had been revealed. It all depended on Captain James Kirk—of the USS 'Enterprise'. Or perhaps another Captain James Kirk—of another USS 'Enterprise'. . .

Kirk raced for the massive blaster as, behind him, Spock lashed out savagely.